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**Stearns Center  
for Teaching and Learning**  
Digital Learning | Teaching Excellence

## From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

Hear that sizzle? It's not just your shoes melting on the sidewalk -- it's Stearns Center's hottest month of the year coming your way!

Will you join us and 200+ of your most amazing colleagues at our 15th annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference? It's **time to register** for the Friday October 6 Conference and the Thursday October 5 Workshop! That way you won't miss out on

- Our Thursday workshop, 3:00-5:00 pm, on Assignment ReDesign in a Gen-AI Era
- Our Friday morning keynote presentation by Dr. Flower Darby on "Teaching in an AI World"
- Over 25 in-person sessions, along with streaming sessions accessible remotely throughout the day
- Morning coffee, free lunch, and an end-of-day reception, with raffle prizes and opportunities to connect

Our first **raffle gift** will go to someone who has **registered by Wednesday, September 20**. It just takes a few minutes to register and ensure that we have enough coffee for you!

If you can't wait until ITL to engage with your colleagues about nifty teaching ideas, don't be sad: we've got a dozen different ways for you to connect with other faculty, learn new tools and strategies, and raise your game for excellence in teaching this month. For instance, you can

- Sign up by Friday, September 15th to join a **Teaching Square**, a high-connection, low-load way to engage with other teaching-minded faculty
- Sign up, if you're new or nearly-new faculty, for our [First-Year Five program](#) and identify how you can improve your inclusive and equitable teaching in five hours
- Join our new workshop on September 12, 10-11, to "Make Room for the Good Stuff" in your course
- Join a new learning community for Inclusive STEM Teaching

And don't forget to **nominate a colleague for a Teaching Award by Tuesday 10/10**. Someone you know is hoping you'll honor them by

1. [Research Assistant Positions](#)

2. [Undergraduate Research](#)

[Scholars Program](#)

3. [Undergraduate Student Travel](#)

[Fund](#)

#### [University Libraries](#)

1. [AI Fall Salon Series](#)

[2023](#)

putting your admiration into action!

You can see our [full Fall Calendar](#) on our events page: keep checking back!

Along with our partners (including the Office of the Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development, Writing Across the Curriculum, Mason Impact, OSCAR, CECiL, Mason Core, Graduate Education, GradLife, University Libraries, Classroom and Lab Technologies, and Information Technology Services) we hope to see you (and a friend!) in person this month, or to support your teaching with any of our online resources. In the meantime, stay cool!

Shelley

E Shelley Reid, Ph.D.

Executive Director of Engaged Teaching

Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning

Associate Professor, English Department

[ereid1@gmu.edu](mailto:ereid1@gmu.edu)

## Events & Deadlines

# INNOVATIONS in Teaching & Learning conference

### Register Now! 15th Annual Innovations in Teaching & Learning Conference

**Friday, October 6th, 2023**

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning invites you to join us for the 15th annual Innovations in Teaching & Learning (ITL) conference on Friday, October 6, 2023.

Join us for a day of workshops, panels, teaching-focused presentations, and networking with colleagues -- not to mention a free lunch and our end-of-day reception! This conference will include a variety of in-person activities, a diverse menu of live-streaming options, and on-demand content. [Visit the ITL website for more information and registration details.](#)

Keynote speaker Dr. Flower Darby, author of *The Norton Guide to Equity-Minded Teaching and Small Teaching Online*, will share her insights on "Teaching in an AI World."

We will also offer a pre-conference workshop: Thursday, October 5th, 3:00-5:00pm on "Assignment Redesign in a Generative AI Era ." (details below)

#### **Want to help? We're seeking volunteers!**

Volunteers make this event possible! We are currently seeking faculty, staff, or graduate students to "host" the conference breakout sessions to help ensure that sessions run smoothly (introduce the presenter, keep an eye on time, etc.) We also seek volunteers to help welcome participants, to help usher participants for the keynote address, and to provide general conference support. If interested, please complete our [volunteer](#)

## Featured Workshop: ITL Preconference Workshop

Thursday, October 5 | 3:00- 5:00 PM | Dewberry Hall

### Can Chat-GPT Pass Your Course? Assignment Redesign in a Generative AI Era

Whether your students are composing brief online discussion posts, lab reports, or capstone projects, they increasingly have access to generative online tools that can assist them—or confound them!—as they work on class assignments. Our task as faculty is to identify, support, and measure the crucial learning students need while enabling them to make good decisions about these new tools.

Join your colleagues for lively discussion and time to work on revisions to a current assignment for one of your courses. We'll help you continue to hold students to a high standard of learning, frame assignments around authentic professional practices, foreground the core critical thinking skills that make us human, and explain your choices and expectations to your students. Faculty from all disciplines, modalities, and course types welcome -- bring your enthusiasm, skepticism, experience, questions, and innovations!

Snacks provided! Facilitators: Shelley Reid, Tom Polk, Laina Lockett, & the Stearns Center team. [Register for this pre-conference workshop by adding it to your ITL Schedule in SCHED.](#)

## TEA Nominations

**Full-time TEA Nomination Deadline: Tuesday, October 10, 2023**

**Adjunct TEA and Online TEA Nomination Deadline: Friday, December 1, 2023**

The 2024 George Mason University Teaching Excellence Awards are open to faculty with significant teaching experience at George Mason.

Our TEAs for full-time faculty (term and tenure-line) offer recognition for excellent teaching overall, and special recognitions for excellence in teaching Mason Core courses, teaching with High Impact Learning, or Teaching for Inclusion and Equity. Faculty who have already completed three or more years teaching at Mason are eligible.

The Adjunct Teaching Excellence Awards recognize excellence in the teaching of part-time faculty who have already completed teaching courses in at least six semesters at Mason.

The Online Teaching Excellence Awards recognize teaching excellence for all instructional faculty members (adjuncts, term, tenured and tenure-track) who have taught at least one fully online course -- synchronous or asynchronous--during the past academic year, and who also have at least four semesters completed of teaching fully online courses at Mason. Faculty do not need to teach exclusively online, nor do their online courses need to occur in consecutive semesters. Honored faculty may additionally be recognized for excellence in the design and implementation of online assessment strategies.

Students, faculty members, or administrators may nominate any faculty member for an award (we don't accept self-nominations). See more information on our [website](#).

To nominate faculty for any award: Please use our [Qualtrics survey](#) to provide the information about your nominee and a few paragraphs about your recommendation for them.

## Teaching Squares Return in September!

Application *Extended* Deadline: Friday, September 15, 2023

**Teaching Squares:** What do other faculty actually do in their courses? How are they adapting to new opportunities, engaging their students, providing feedback, managing their time, and supporting long-term learning? If you joined a Teaching Square, you could find out!

Stearns Center Teaching Squares are a kind of professional “pot-luck dinner”: a quick way to build your teaching network and learn strategies that will support your teaching. For Fall 2023, we will match interested faculty with a Square of colleagues from across the university (usually four people, but sometimes a little larger or smaller) and guide you through a quick four-part approach:

- Each Square meets once near the middle/end of September for introductions and planning
- Each member of the Square shares some element of a course they’re currently teaching
- Each member provides feedback to the others by late September or early October
- The whole Square meets in early or mid October for a conversation about what they’ve learned and how they can support one another further

See additional information [on our website](#). To indicate your interest for Fall 2023, **please complete our two-minute form** by Friday, September 15, 2023.

## FIRST YEAR FIVE!

**Early Bird Registration Deadline: Friday, September 15 | First Year Five AY2023-2024** Join us for a new cohort of First Year Five!

We invite new\* faculty to improve their anti-racist, inclusive, and equity-minded teaching strategies they use to teach at Mason while building a network of like-minded peers across the university, starting in their first weeks at Mason. Faculty who join the First Year Five program will be invited to identify and participate in five hours of work that is intended to improve the anti-racist, inclusive, and equity-based strategies they use to teach at Mason. Faculty will identify, complete, log, and reflect briefly on each of their five hours to earn a completion certificate and be featured in a recognition email to their Dean/Chair. Participants will benefit from approximately three in-person meetings over the course of the 2023-2024 academic year, a bi-weekly newsletter, and other forms of support/engagement as needed. **If you sign-up and submit your participation first hour before September 15, you will be entered in a raffle to win an Amazon gift card!** See our [webpage](#) for more information. Email questions or comments to Dr. Aimee Weinstein ([aweinste@gmu.edu](mailto:aweinste@gmu.edu)). [Register here](#).

\*New faculty can be defined as those in their first year of teaching, in their first few years of teaching, and/or new to teaching at Mason.

# Digital Learning

## Ensuring Quality as You Teach Your Fall 2023 Online Course

Online Quality is Important for the student learning experience at Mason. The Stearns Center Digital Learning Team has adapted research-based standards and

## Using the Checklist



### Pre-Launch

Use the Checklist to help plan and build your course, and to gauge your course's readiness before it goes live.



### In-Progress

Conduct self-reviews to catch any potential issues early on and during your course, making changes as needed.



### Post-Course

Conduct self-reviews and also collaborate with colleagues to review courses, identifying areas for improvement.

developed the Online Quality Checklist to help Mason faculty with online course design or re-design, and to identify quality elements in Mason online courses. As you teach your Fall 2023 online course, please use the Checklist to make sure that your teaching includes the essential elements for quality teaching online.

You may find the **Online Quality Checklist** and more information on online quality assurance posted on Stearns Center website at <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/online-course-quality/>

For your questions regarding Online Quality Assurance, please contact Stearns Center Digital Learning's Quality Assurance Team at: [gateam@gmu.edu](mailto:gateam@gmu.edu) .

# Faculty Development Workshops

## Continuing Professional Development Workshops

Do you want to improve your assignments, your grading, or your online discussions this fall, but don't have time for a lengthy redesign? Are you completing an evaluation portfolio and want to document your commitment to improving your teaching? Our one-hour, interactive CPD workshops might be just the thing!

The Stearns Center is offering a series of **Continuing Professional Development workshops** throughout Fall 2023. These workshops cover fundamental topics including course design, effective grading, engaging students, and providing feedback for written assignments. Please register via links on our **Events page**; workshops will be virtual or have a virtual option throughout Fall 2023.

Faculty who complete four CPD workshops and our completion survey will receive the Stearns Center Level One Faculty Development Credential.

### First Year Five Early Bird Registration Deadline: Friday, September 15 | AY2023-2024

**If you sign-up and submit your participation first hour before September 15, you will be entered in a raffle to win an Amazon gift card!** See our **webpage** for more information. Email questions or comments to Dr. Aimee Weinstein ([aweinste@gmu.edu](mailto:aweinste@gmu.edu)). **Register here.**

\*New faculty can be defined as those in their first year of teaching, in their first few years of teaching, and/or new to teaching at Mason.

### Workshop: Avoid the Tyranny of Content: How to Make Room for the Good Stuff

September 12 | 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. | Zoom | CPD Level 1, Design| Facilitator: Crystal Anderson | **Register here.**

## **Workshop: Anti-Racism and Inclusive Teaching: An Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces**

September 14 | 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Engage | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho | [Register here](#).

### **Course Proposal Workshop**

**September 15 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. | Zoom | Facilitators: Laura Poms, Shelley Reid, Rachel Yoho**

Mason Core Committee is seeking course proposals for courses in the revised Global Contexts category and the new Just Societies flag.

See more about [Mason Core courses](#) or contact Mason Core for more information (masoncor@gmu.edu). [Register here](#).

## **Workshop: Fundamentals of Effective Teaching**

**September 20 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Required | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson**

This workshop is required for the Level 1 Teaching Essentials Credential for the Continuing Professional Development Program. [Register here](#).

### **Course Proposal Workshop**

**September 26 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. | Zoom | Facilitators: Laura Poms, Shelley Reid, Rachel Yoho**

Mason Core Committee is seeking course proposals for courses in the revised Global Contexts category and the new Just Societies flag. See more about [Mason Core courses](#) or contact Mason Core for more information (masoncor@gmu.edu). [Register here](#).

## **Workshop: Reading as Active Learning in STEM**

**September 29 | 10:30 a.m. - 11:45am | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Design | Facilitator: Laina Lockett**

How many times have you asked your class a question only to realize that only a few (or maybe none) of your students have done the assigned reading? The small changes discussed in this workshop can have large and long-lasting impacts for your students, so be sure to join the session! [Register here](#)

### **Local Learning Community for Inclusive STEM Teaching Project**

**October 11-November 15 | 11:00-12:30pm (Every Wednesday) | Zoom | Facilitators: Rochelle Jones, Kelly Knight, and Laina Lockett**

Each week this local learning community (LLC) will take time to extend and reflect on the topics covered in the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project EdX course. This NSF sponsored course is aimed to “advance the awareness, self-efficacy, and ability of STEM faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and staff to cultivate inclusive learning environments for all their students and to develop themselves as reflective, inclusive practitioners.” To participate in this LLC, please register for the Inclusive STEM Teaching Project Course ([linked here](#)) and let us know that you will be joining us by registering directly with us too ([linked here](#)). Past course participants are

also welcome to join this local learning community group and should register using the second link only.

## Workshop: Providing Feedback to Support Student Revision

Want to develop a more sustainable plan for providing feedback? This workshop will help faculty increase student engagement with and the impact of their feedback. Participants will first learn more about how students revise before exploring some strategies for providing feedback to support more substantive student revision. The workshop will close by offering faculty some time to implement one of the strategies into their courses.

Days and time (all held on Zoom): September 29th, 12:00-1:00pm. [Register here](#)

# Writing Across the Curriculum

## Faculty Writing Sprints!

MS Teams | Every Friday 9:00-11:00am

Find time—make time—for your writing, by joining colleagues every Friday morning from 9-11am. Jointly hosted by Faculty Affairs & Development and Writing Across the Curriculum, our Faculty Writing Sprints and Women's Accountability Group offer uninterrupted time where you can accomplish your writing goals and network with colleagues from across campus. To learn more and to join, [please visit our website](#). Questions? Visit our [website](#) or email us at [wac@gmu.edu](mailto:wac@gmu.edu).



## WAC Salon October 4th, 2-3pm

Join colleagues from across campus for a casual conversation about teaching with writing. As a jumping-off point for our conversation, Seth Hudson, Associate Professor of Game Writing, will share his journey as an instructor-researcher seeking a sound pedagogy of writing for video games, an ill-defined area of a competitive industry that limits access to outsiders. Discussing what ultimately became his two-year dissertation study and later revised for publication—see [Approaching a Pedagogy of Game Writing](#) (Hudson, 2022)—Seth will present the benefits of instructors directly engaging practitioners in the field and advocate for research that enhances your teaching while the

data's still rolling in. [Join us October 4th at 2pm on Zoom.](#)

## From Our Partners

Office of Faculty Affairs & Development

## Aligning Your Time and Priorities Workshop on September 13

Do you find yourself at the end of the semester wondering where time went and feeling like you were not able to accomplish what you needed? Are you looking forward to a productive semester? You are invited to an interactive workshop to help you align your time with your career goals for this academic year. The Faculty Matters Workshop Series is designed to address key issues central to faculty development and success. This yearlong series is a collaboration between Faculty Affairs and Research Development Service.

This workshop will take place on Wednesday, September 13, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on Zoom. **Registration is required, sign up here.**

## Coaching for Inclusive Excellence Learning and Development Program Available During September/October

The Office of Faculty Affairs & Development's Coaching for Inclusive Excellence (CoFIE) Program offers strategies for inclusive recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty. These strategies, applicable across all disciplines and fields of study, are taken from decades of research that have resulted in best practices nationwide.. If your unit wishes to schedule any of the CoFIE synchronous courses at other times or if faculty wishes to register for the Include U asynchronous course, email [Dr. Millie Rivera](mailto:Dr.Millie.Rivera).

- **CoFIE III: Fair Evaluation of RPT Dossiers**

Thursday, Sept. 12 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. | [Register](#)

Based on the work of the University of Michigan's STRIDE (Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) Committee, this course explores the role of schemas in the performance evaluation of faculty and the influence of various factors across domains such as grant applications, student evaluations, and recommendation letters. It also highlights how the cumulative effects of these considerations can create advantages and disadvantages for faculty members. Lastly, the course presents research on the potential negative impact of parental or other types of leave on the review of a faculty member's dossier. (Focuses on I/R faculty)

- **CoFIE IV: Include U Bystander Intervention in the Academic Workplace**

The goal of Include U is to increase awareness of how bias affects the academic workplace and the various ways we can intervene when we see bias incidents occurring. Through three modules, the course explores four settings: Search Committees, Faculty Meetings, Faculty Peer Evaluations (P&T) and Casual Interactions. The course was created through a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant, and is available either virtually or in person, as a group experience. (Focuses on I/R faculty). To register for the online asynchronous course, contact [Dr. Millie Rivera](mailto:Dr.Millie.Rivera).

**Faculty are strongly encouraged to attend the in-person sessions for a more impactful experience.**

**Module 1** (Bias Incidents in the Academic Workplace). Thursday, Sept 14 | 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. | Johnson Center, Meeting Room C, Fairfax Campus. [Register here.](#)

**Module 2** (How to Intervene when you see Bias Incidents). Wednesday, Sept. 20 | 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. | Johnson Center, Meeting Room C, Fairfax Campus. [Register here.](#)

**Module 3** (More Scenarios and Approaches to Intervening). Monday, Oct. 9 | 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. | Johnson Center, Meeting Room C, Fairfax Campus. [Register here.](#)



Visit the [Coaching for Inclusive Excellence website](#) for additional dates when the course is offered.

## Opportunity to Join an Affinity Group

As part of Mason's commitment to inclusive excellence, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development supports faculty and doctoral students' affinity groups. These groups provide our diverse faculty and doctoral students with a sense of community, inclusion and belonging. The groups also serve as safe spaces for discussion of issues that impact the success and well-being of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Multiracial, Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islanders and First-Generation faculty members and historically underserved doctoral students. Learn more about Affinity Groups [here](#).

## OSCAR

### Research Assistant Positions

OSCAR is expanding opportunities for students to learn research, creative, or scholarly methods in their field and giving faculty free support on their projects at the same time. [Learn how you can hire a research assistant.](#)

### Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on a research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. **Spring 2024 applications are now open.** The deadline to apply is October 11, 2023. [Find more information on our website.](#)

### Undergraduate Student Travel Fund

The Undergraduate Student Travel Fund (USTF) supports research and scholarly related travel for undergraduates who are presenting their projects via poster, talk, screening, round table, performance, etc. USTF can support costs associated with presentations at virtual conferences. Students must apply 30 days before the start of the event. [Learn more here.](#)

## University Libraries

### George Mason University Libraries AI Fall Salon Series 2023

#### sa·lon

The word salon is French, originally meaning "reception room." In 1800's France, the meaning grew to include a "gathering of elegant people" occurring regularly in said room.

# Artificial Intelligence Salon Series

Join Mason Libraries for a series of scholarly discussions regarding artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as ChatGPT and their effects on higher education and society. We will facilitate open dialog for learning more about this rapidly expanding topic and what it means for Mason and the global community. Mark your calendars now!

sa-lon

*The word salon is French, originally meaning "reception room." In 1800's France, the meaning grew to include a "gathering of elegant people" occurring regularly.*

## ***AI in Business and Government***

### **FENWICK LIBRARY READING ROOM**

- September 21st, 4pm-5pm
- Moderators: Kayla Gourlay (Business and Economics Librarian) and Lorena Jordan (Policy and

Government Librarian)

### ***AI, Ethics, and Academic Integrity***

- October 9th, 4pm-5pm
- Moderator: Trevor Watkins (Teaching and Outreach Librarian)

### ***AI in the Arts and Humanities***

- November 15th, 4pm-5pm
- Moderators: Stephanie Grimm (Art and Art History Librarian) and Megan Reichelt (Theater, Dance, and Women & Gender Studies Librarian)

### ***AI in the Social Sciences and STEM***

- December 6th, 4pm-5pm
- Moderators: Chris Magee (Social Sciences Librarian) and Dr. Heidi Blackburn (Computing Librarian)

All salons will be moderated by Mason librarians and held in the Fenwick Library Main Reading Room (Level 2). In order to promote community, engagement, and thoughtful dialog, a Zoom option will not be available at this time.

All are welcome to attend!

Thank you to the AI Fall Salon series Planning Committee: Chris Magee, Trevor Watkins, and Heidi Blackburn.

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